AFTER DARK

In the blue corner — Phil Lynott limbers up for the Big Fight. Seconds: Jimmy Bain (left) and Mark Nauseef.

That was some bash

THE casual London viewer, tuning in last Wednesday evening to the commercial channel's Thames At Six for Andrew Gardner's expert analysis of the crisis, may have been amused/disgusted/moved to considerable indifference (delete wherever applicable) by a brief report on the launching, at a party the previous evening, of Infinity Records.

The cameras panned along the serried ranks of minor celebrities and the usual turnout of gay liggers, tracked along the pier of banquet tables sagging visibly beneath the collective weight of the buffet supper, and halted at the figure, certainly imposing — if somewhat incongruous — of Arthur Mullard, who was briskly interviewed by the intrepid Thames team.

The reporter's voice then assumed a graver tone as she recounted a rather heated skirmish between Thin Lizzy's Phil Lynott — whose name she pronounced with some curious difficulty — and a member of the merry throng whom she was unable to identify. The screens of the Home Counties at that moment came alive with a vivid still of the encounter: Lynott (on the left) looked suitably menacing in black leather; on the right, apparently delivering an animated harangue to the Lizzy's distinguished leader, was his opponent, Allan Jones.

The Welsh hack had recently been introduced to Mr Lynott by a mutual friend (a former member, incidentally, of this paper's staff and also a former publicist for Thin Lizzy). Our man was unsurprised at the indifference displayed by Mr Lynott; he had in the past not been especially kind to the Lizzies in various dispatches (indeed, he fully expected a degree of hostility). Lynott was reminded, to his increasing agitation, of several unkind remarks made in these pages by the less than reverential Jones.

He confessed to finding reasonably amusing some of the scurrilous references to himself and his band which had appeared at various instances in the Raver and, more recently, the After Dark columns.

He was, however, more peeved at the recollection of a review of the Lizzies' 1977 concert at a football stadium in Dublin, during which Jones had the temerity to state that he had actually preferred the respective performance of Graham Parker & the Rumour and the Boomtown Rats (and had concluded by saying that he would have found Thin Lizzy's appearances more endearing had they brought their act to a climax by firing Derek the Dog over the grandstand with a rocket up its arse). Lynott was especially annoyed at this less than enthusiastic notice because the concert coincided with his birthday.

Lynott and Jones proceeded to discuss (rather less than rationally, it should be admitted) the merits of Lizzy: there followed what might euphemistically be described as a frank exchange of views, with Lynott at one point threatening to finish off the job started by Tony Iommi. Jones diplomatically ignored this latter remark and managed — he thought successfully — to deflect Lynott from this course of action. Lynott, in fact, seemed placated by this time.

However, a careless remark from one of the company — our former colleague, who had negotiated the original introduction, in fact — provoked an unexpected outburst from the tired and emotional Lynott. He grabbed Jones by the shoulders and attempted to knee him in the face; Jones grabbed a leather bound knee, and the pair waltzed clumsily in a giddy circle as all about them erupted into modest chaos and Lynott declared, to our bewilderment, "My people have been oppressed for a thousand years."

The fracas was short-lived, and little damage was incurred by either party. The principal protagonists then divorced themselves from the simmering throng and attempted to clarify the reasons for the argument (and, it was hoped, reach some kind of reconciliation).

It was at this moment that the contestants were joined by the Thames crew and surrounded by a posse of excited photographers. Lynott, fairly outraged at the intrusion of the papparazzi, swung around on the photographers and advanced upon one hapless individual. With commendable vigour he wrested the camera from the photographer and with a tremendous flourish raised it above his head and then dashed it dramatically to the floor. He and Jones then retired to the bar.

Lynott was later interviewed by Thames; the reporter asked Lynott to talk to viewers through the fracas. He stared myopically into the lens — "Someone," he slurred, "was slagging off the Oirish. An' they're *not* a people to be slagged off."

We surely know how to enjoy ourselves.

— **EAMONN ANDREWS.**